

OUR TIMES AND OUR DUTIES.

AN ADDRESS

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COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS,

1872.

Young men that have just completed a course of Christian Theology, and, being duly commissioned for the work, are about to go forth to preach the Gospel to mankind in this nineteenth century, occupy a very peculiar and very responsible position; one that calls for anxious exercises of mind and deep searchings of heart. Their position, from the nature of things, is very elevated, and as they look forth from it their musings, aspirations and purposes ought to be equally so; lofty, deep and wide, according to the full measure of the ability which God has given each. What would we think of the man who, about to be crowned Emperor of the Russias, or inaugurated President of some great republic covering a continent, should be found on the occasion in quite an ordinary mood of mind; or, if there was something a little unusual about him, it was all discovered to pertain to himself, his official consequence, his personal distinction, and other such-like little things, not at all to pertain to the high subjects and great responsi-

bility naturally connected with such office and occupation? We should all promptly say he was unworthy of his position. So, in the case before us, we have a right to expect that the young man about to be inducted into the Christian ministry, will endeavor, in every possible way, to stir up his whole nature to a realization of what he is about, and, in a deep sense of his individual responsibility, will make individual effort to take into the account everything that ought to be accounted of, weighing them with that solicitous impartiality which a sense of God's holy presence, and a felt dependence on his Spirit for all real good, are fitted to impart.

And as he will cherish a spirit at once elevated and humble—humble *because* elevated—so will he strive against all narrowness of feeling, all contractedness of view, everything which would make him partial and one-sided in his estimate of men and things, when he ought to be impartial, comprehensive, and truthful.

Of the very many topics in harmony with these sentiments, to which, under existing circumstances, our attention might naturally be directed, I confine myself to *two*. The first is, *the character of the age to which we belong, and the condition of mind, on our part, which befits it.*

For the “largeness of heart” of which I have just spoken there is a special call at this time. Some may think that we already have too much of it, and that we need contraction rather than expansion. They would judge it wise not to come forth and meet the age face

to face in kindliness, and in a spirit at once confident and confiding, but rather to separate ourselves from it, and retire within our own shell, calling it *conservatism*; forgetting that there is a true and false conservatism, and that the latter, like penuriousness, “*withholdeth more than is meet*” (with a view, no doubt, to self-preservation and self-enrichment), but “*it tendeth to poverty.*” It is a poor way to correct one extreme by another. Such a course is, to say the least, a war measure, not a peace measure, and, like most wars, only aggravates the evil. It aggravates the evil by lending it a seeming justification. One ultraism is only kept in countenance by another, its opposite. The movements of an age are to be regarded as part of that progress of things which belongs to the scheme of Providence, and in order to control it we must recognize it, simply seeking, in sympathy with God’s purposes and man’s needs, to guide it according to the principles of the Gospel. The Saviour rebuked men in his day for not heeding “*the signs of the times*” with reference to coming events, and, of course, present duty. “*The signs of the TIMES,*” be it observed. The term is comprehensive. Not the signs of our locality, our immediate associations, our country, or our church, but of all the world, and all the churches in it, with their characteristics and works. The providence of God is everywhere, and not confined to us; and everywhere it is instructive. We, then, shall deserve a similar rebuke to that which the Saviour gave the Jews, if we fail to study these times, and to under-

stand the character and condition of the world to which we belong, and the actual state of Christianity in the world, and within itself. It is only by such knowledge that we shall be prepared to apply the great and immutable principles given us of God,—immutable amid all the changes of time, persons, opinions, organizations, and events.

It is not with a view to feed the vanity and egotism of this nineteenth century that we assert it to be altogether peculiar, in the influences which have been brought to bear upon it, and the events that have sprung out of its bosom. The next hundred years, for aught we know, *may* bring powers into play, and exhibit providential phenomena to the world, which shall throw all that we now witness into the shade. But thus far, at least, the world has seen nothing like the present, since the beginning of our era, except, perhaps, the period of the Reformation.

The world is, and ever has been, made up of two classes, the leaders and the led, the thinkers and those who do not think; the one class active and the other passive; the one as cyphers in an arithmetical amount, the other as the significant figures; the latter indispensable to all number, and in human history the chief factors. But, through the diffusion of education and the multiplication of books, and the increased facilities of travel and observation and conference with men, it has come to pass that these leaders, these significant figures in the practical arithmetic of human life, have

in our day been multiplied a hundredfold; and the intellectual activity thus increased among men is made vastly more effective by the rapidity with which it can diffuse itself over the earth, outstripping even time, as marked by the revolution of our planet on its axis. And whilst physical appliances are furnished to give free course to thought, the right of thought to freedom is now recognized by men as it never was before. *This fact alone* signalizes our age above all preceding ages, so that an appropriate motto might be found for it in the language of St. Paul: "*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*" Where truth is concerned, it is now felt, *force* finds no proper place. Exhortation, persuasion, argument—these, in the best parts of the civilized world, are the only recognized instruments for setting right the opinions of those we deem in error. And as force is repudiated as a fit instrument of social enlightenment, so is, also, mere *authority*. No man has a right to claim submission to his opinions merely because of his wealth, his rank, his office, his genius or reputed learning. As *authoritative* instruments of mental conviction, these things are out of date. The time was, indeed, when kings reigned by divine right, priests spake with oracular averment, and when, strange to say, into such a habit had the general mind been schooled, that even in philosophy itself the "*ipse dixit*" of the Stagirite was enough. *Now*, however, if we would set the world right in its opinions, we must adopt another method—use another instrumentality. We have now

to meet our fellow-men, not as the magistrate meets the offender against law, with pains and penalties; nor as the parent sometimes meets the child, rod in hand; but rather as equals meet equals in the battle-field, saving the bitterness and the bloodshed! We have to bring forth our strong reasons, so far as we have got them, as the only weapons suitable in this warfare. We have to make our appeal to the first principles of nature and Revelation, there taking our stand, doing nothing inconsistent with these, whether men will hear or whether they forbear. Anything more than this cometh of evil. If all our efforts fail to secure acceptance for the truth, instead of resorting to unauthorized expedients, we must fold our arms, and bow our heads in submission to that all-controlling power which lies back in eternity, and claims to move at its own rate of progress, and to determine, out of the means employed, "*which* shall prosper, this or that," and *when* it shall prosper, now or then.

To all this should be added, that if this statement be specially applicable to these *times*, so is it also to this *country*. This country, as regards the great principles of society and life to which I have been referring, is, so to say, the birthplace of the nineteenth century: here, if anywhere, these principles are at home and find their proper sphere of operation. Under the influence of an inconsiderate, and perhaps a somewhat selfish conservatism, some may at times be tempted to wish it were not so. They would rather go back to the days when the great working principle of society was sheer human

authority, and when far more deference was paid to station and power than to reason and argument. But surely this is a great weakness. The shadow did not go back on the sun-dial of Ahaz except by *miracle*: its *natural* course was forward. This retrospective feeling is a mere longing for the flesh-pots of Egypt, occasioned by the pressure of the evils of the wilderness (though through that wilderness is the only way to the Land of Promise, that glory of all lands). Such a feeling is apt to be also the offspring of a mere querulous dissatisfaction with the present. It belongs to those "laudatores temporis acti" whom Horace mentions only to satirize. It is forgotten that Providence is not stationary, but progressive; that though there be eddies in the current here and there, the stream is ever onward. It is forgotten, too, that the inspired Preacher, dealing with those of a fastidious and discontented spirit, says: "*Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for then dost thou NOT INQUIRE WISELY concerning this.*" Though Solomon does not *expressly* assert the correct idea, he rebukes the wrong.

There is a consideration here which should not be overlooked. The tendency of things in human life and history, now referred to, to give increased prominence to knowledge, and individual persuasion based upon it, is not something *accidental* and *temporary*, but necessary and intrinsic. It has been too long in the world, and has been growing too gradually and steadily, to be regarded in any other light. To recoil from it, or to

fight against it, therefore, though men do not think it, is to fight against God. It is *He* who has constructed the world on this principle of progression; and His work is perfect. Yet another thought here: fear of the consequences to society is the innocent cause, with many, of the feeling and position here combated. As the despot and his supporters honestly think that to hearken to the cry of the oppressed, and to yield to the most reasonable demands of suffering, is but an entering wedge to anarchy, so, in regard to the matter before us, the matters of morals and religion, those we are arguing with think that if private opinion is not restrained by physical force now and again, or at least checked by a paramount human authority, speaking *ex cathedra*, papal, or at least sacerdotal, a moral chaos will ensue, darkness and light become mingled up, truth and error confounded, and moral right and wrong, like two opposing electricities coming together, will produce an explosion which will rend to pieces the whole spiritual sphere, leaving us no ideas but those pertaining to matter, and no feelings but those which are sensual and selfish. But how groundless the fear, and how derogatory its indulgence to the honor of God! At the best it is but the "*Alas, master,*" of the prophet's servant, when he saw the danger, but, for lack of faith, saw not the divine provision made to meet it.

Let it not be supposed that in denying definitive human authority, official or unofficial, the world of thought is left without conservative principles, the time-

piece without its balance-wheel, the machine without its governor. Those who think so are oblivious, surely, of that which they ought to remember. In denying human authority over the reason and conscience in matters of speculation and opinion, (for we are not speaking here of practical government and law, whether civil or ecclesiastical), we do not, be it observed in the first place, deny or depreciate the agency of *influence*. That is, and ever must be, great among men. It is needless to say it ought to be. Men *cannot* stand side by side in society and not influence one another. The trees of the forest do not. But human influence, though so great, differs in many respects from human authority. It is less definite and peremptory. It is not positive, like law, but rather natural, like reason. It does not break down and crush; on the contrary, it develops and cherishes. Whatever *it* may do with humanity, still it remains true that a "man's a man for a' that;" it does not make him a slave. It rather lifts him up into the region where sheer force and sheer human authority have no place—the region of free thought. Besides, this principle of influence is more ubiquitous and abiding than any other. After the *authority* of the parent has ceased, his *influence* remains, and may go on increasing to the end. The influence of a worthy minister of the Word is great, and continues to grow, in the midst of the renunciation of all sacerdotal claims on his part, and of the jealous disclaimer of superstitious subjection on the part of others. When the Protestant Reformers

ceased to act as "lords over God's heritage," and renounced all such pretensions as unscriptural, did they lose hold, in the way of influence, on the people of their flocks? I trow not. The language and tone of reason and affection, *i. e.*, of *influence*, proved mightier than those of authority.

But, surely, it may well be said, the thinking world, the world of thought, cannot get along without authority, properly so called, any more than government without force. As we have the magistrate in civil matters, with his jails and gibbets, and in ecclesiastical, with his excommunications and depositions, so in matters of principle and opinion must we have authority. Most certainly: nothing more certain. Man was never meant to be entirely unrestrained in his opinions by external authority. And what our very constitution thus calls for, through God's goodness we have. I allude not now to conscience, by which man is chained to the throne of God; nor yet to reason, which is something indestructible, and when plunging into darkness is still a light. I allude to nothing so subjective, so unsteady, so much under man's control to shape and modify in its working. I allude to something outside of man, given to man, addressing itself to his very senses; something providentially provided to the race, and made a part of the permanent moral furniture of the world: I allude to *the Bible, the inspired Word of God*. Though so long slighted and denied its high prerogatives; though supplanted by priestly authority; though jealously with-

drawn from free circulation, and put out of sight, lest it interfere with that authority; though at times literally persecuted like the martyrs, and sought to be destroyed, and at other times sought to be perverted in interpretation by sophistical ingenuity; behold, it stands forth in our midst, *the divine constitution and code of the moral universe*, indestructible and unchangeable, so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. No matter what revolutions may take place among men, this cannot be revolutionized out of existence; it cannot pass away. Unless such a catastrophe as the world has never experienced should take place (against which it seems secured by an express divine promise), the Bible is to the world a *κτῆμα εἰς αἰετ.* Society has taken possession of it for safe keeping; or rather it has taken possession of society. The Bible and humanity have been providentially wedded; God presided at the nuptials, and the union can never be dissolved.

Divines and others make a distinction between the Bible as a book, and the contents of the Bible as so much moral and religious abstract truth; and the distinction is true and has its uses. But there is no occasion for it here. The remarks that have been made apply equally well to both views. Not only have the essential *truths* of Scripture “waked” in our world, as the poet has it, “to perish never” from among men, but *The Book*, *Το Βιβλίον*, as such, as a “form of sound words,” as a well-known volume in circulation, made in whole or in part the subject of criticism, friendly

or hostile, for more than three thousand years, is a fixture, a permanent fixture and appliance in that moral and spiritual edifice which God is raising in the world to the glory of his grace. You can no more banish it from among men, than you can remove the atmosphere from our globe. It belongs not to this man or that man, this age or that age, but to every age in succession; and it comes to all through a law of entail which cannot be broken. The book, confessedly perfect as it came from the hands of God, has not lost a particle of its perfection, in any practical sense, in the hands of men. We have the divine *text* brought into such close approximation to the inspired autographs, that they are for all practical purposes identical. And the *inspiration* too, which we ascribe to it, and which gives it authority over the conscience, is of such a nature as (without running into refinements and subtleties which are out of analogy with all God's other works) to set the volume before the world as divine, in a sense applicable nowhere else, and to challenge for it, just in the form which criticism has determined, an obedience of the reason and the conscience, which is due to no other book, because no other is infallible.

But after all it may be thought, "This is very well: the volume is doubtless very instructive; but still it is only a book—a dead book. What we want is a *living* authority, a *person* to speak to us, as did Peter or Paul or John to their contemporaries." Now, in the first place, it should be remembered, it is not for *us* to deter-

mine what precisely are our needs, much less how they can be best supplied. In the next, it may well be asked, whether, of these two authorities, the Bible and its exponents, the former would not command more deference if the latter were more modest and less assuming in their pretensions? Is it not a fact, indeed, that they have ever been, in their sway over human minds, according to all history, in inverse proportion to one another? But aside from this; how utterly unfitting the sentiment to which I have given words! "Dead Book," forsooth! Is it so men would characterize the communications of God's love and holiness, sent down from heaven to men? Inspiration, the book itself, uses other language, calls even the tables of stone, together with the other legislative enactments given by Moses to his people in written form, "*lively oracles*," *λογια ζωντα*. Why, the very existence of the Bible in the world is, silently and implicitly, a source of *life*, intellectual and moral, to *society*, in untold ways, and to a degree which it is difficult to exaggerate; whilst to many *individuals*, through the grace of God, it is also the means of imparting a yet *higher life*, even a divine; sometimes without the intervention of any other agency than that which put it into the man's hands, and therefore without any authority but its own.

Still men are not satisfied with a *book* as an authority over them. They are disposed to spurn it, I was going to say, as the frogs in the fable spurned king log. They must have a personal authority with it to correct and

control it. But here again, in the way of remonstrance, we are led to ask, have they not got what they thus importunately crave, and that too in a form better than they “desire or deserve?” Have they not got it also in closest *connection with* the Scriptures? For what is the burden of the book? Does not that “dead” volume, all through, speak of the living, personal, present God? Does it not refer everything to Him, and tell us we can do and get no good, even from itself, without Him? Does it not, in its every precept and promise, seek to bring men nearer to Him? seek to make them realize His presence, delight in His communion, bow humbly and cheerfully to His authority, and His alone? Is not its language everywhere, “*Trust ye not in man; put not your trust in princes,*” “*trust ye in God,*” the living and the personal God? The Bible is full of God. It says next to nothing of nature, or natural laws, or abstractions of any kind. Everything is concrete, personal, divine. God is all in all. Whilst the book, therefore, must needs, by its æsthetical and moral contents, command reverence from men, its great peculiarity, wherein lies the hiding of its power, is, that *if* dead and impersonal itself, it remits everybody who peruses its pages or hears its words, to the central, the supreme personality, to God; and moreover, when men show a disposition to bow down to human or created authority, after the manner of John in the Apocalyptic vision to the angel, it promptly and everywhere says, “*See thou do it not.*” Besides this, the Bible is a safe authority in

another way: *it cannot be made to interpose itself between the soul and God.* A sacerdotal caste *necessarily* does; even a Scriptural ministry, through criminal inconsistency, *may* do so; but the Bible *cannot*. Every tone and accent refers and defers to God alone, as much so as the thundering of Sinai, or the voice on the mount of Transfiguration, "*Hear ye Him.*" Thus does the Bible put ballast into society and individual minds, which, while it steadies their motion, does not retard their progress, and while it makes them truly and rightly reverent, leaves them free.

Now then, in conclusion of this topic; in many respects this Nineteenth century is very peculiar. The number of those who claim to think and judge for themselves is immensely multiplied; restraints which once chained men down in un murmuring subjection are being cast off; "Many are running to and fro, and knowledge is being increased;" wonderful discoveries are being made, and most ingenious inventions, both beautiful and useful, are being contrived; much wildness of speculation is indulged by some, and earnestness of inquiry by more; infidelity that was once latent is now patent, whilst, on the other hand, the advocates of the truth are as outspoken and intelligent as they ever were: in short, the world presents to the observant eye a scene of life, animation, activity, conflict, and signs of coming change, never witnessed before; so much so, indeed, that timid spirits are ready to think our condition becoming almost desperate, at least very critical.

"The Lord reigneth, be the people never so unquiet!"

Let no man's heart fail him in the smallest degree. Neither let him seek to recall old and worn-out appliances to keep the world in awe; nor resort to mere human expedients to inspire and foster reverence; nor try to *cow* the minds of men, in order to control their conduct. It will be in vain thus to put new wine into old bottles. We cannot safely thus ignore the progress of time and the changes of the world. Even supposing the means formerly used for this purpose innocent in their day; they are neither innocent nor efficient now. The Goliath of modern error and sin (every age has its own Goliath) is not to be slain by physical force, nor official authority, nor sacerdotal claims, nor ritualistic puerilities, but by the sling and stone of the pure Word of God, wielded and directed by the Spirit, the Spirit of God, sought in prayer, and consciously depended on. Proceeding on these principles the servants of God may engage fearlessly in the duties which this Nineteenth century imposes, confidently expecting that through the divine blessing they will be able, collectively, and each man in his own humble sphere and measure, to check the evils, the great evils of the age, and develop and push forward to maturity its good, its far greater good.

Intimately connected with the spirit of the age in which we are living, of which I have been speaking, is the other topic to which I referred at the beginning, *"the divided condition of the Christian Church, and the duties which it imposes."* The fact of division is no

novelty in the world. The germs of it we see putting forth vigorously under the very eye of the Apostles; when these men of God were laid in their graves, the evil was yet further developed; and so it has continued to this hour. For long centuries we have had the great Churches of the West and the East, the Latin and the Greek, together with several minor Churches, such as the Nestorian, the Coptic, and the Armenian; and for the last three hundred years we have had an increased number of smaller Churches; "smaller," I say and mean, *numerically*, not otherwise; for many of them are making themselves felt for good to the very ends of the earth, and are passing rapidly into the class of larger Churches. But the fact of division stands before us, not to be ignored on the one hand, nor yet on the other to be discussed in a polemical spirit, but rather in a spirit of Christian philanthropy and philosophy, in which the chief inquiry shall be, what it means, and what duties it imposes.

Division in itself, and generally considered, whether we understand by it the transient *process*, or the permanent *result* of the process, is not evil, but varies according to circumstances. Division in the Church of Christ, in like manner, is not, in either of these senses *per se* evil; although in every case there is connected with it more or less of that which is to be deplored. Error and sin may be so great and rife on both sides, in the origin, process, and resulting condition, as to make the division altogether bad. And again it may be, that the evil is

but partial and one-sided, and then this partial evil may be universal good. This last case might be illustrated in that great event which we are wont to call "the Reformation," the Protestant Reformation. That division, offending those in power, occasioned long-continued and terrible persecutions; and as it gave unwonted liberty to those who were made free, by some that liberty was abused; but notwithstanding, who does not remember that though Christ had prayed that His disciples might be one, even as He and the Father were one, yet He authorized the movement, or one very analogous to it, by that command given through one of His angels, "*Come out of her, my people?*" And who among us, as he looks over the earth and observes the condition of the nations, is not ready from his inmost heart to bless God that he raised up Luther for the work which he was the means of initiating?

Rome denies the innocence of *any* division in the Church of God; and very consistently provides for this view, by asserting her own infallibility, and identifying herself with that Church; but we have not so learned Christ. Many again who are not Romanists, are haunted with the fear that though change, in the form of division, is admissible, and oftentimes absolutely necessary, *in all other cases and connections*, if it be conceded at all *in the Church of Christ*, Christians will divide and subdivide and disintegrate, till no *society* ecclesiastical is left, nothing will remain but individuals! A groundless apprehension, a mere panic fear! as might be abund-

antly shown. Enough, to say, that absolute chaos is no more possible in the Church than in the State, nor in the State than in Nature. Surely there is as much of the attraction of aggregation in Christianity, as in the secular affairs of men. Would we, moreover, be willing to deliver the Christian Church, manacled and fettered, over to false doctrine, or bad morals, or oppressive administration, without the right of remedy? And, lastly, do we not see manifest signs of a *unifying* spirit springing up in the Christian Church, greater than was ever seen before, and sounder and better also, because it comes of reason, not force; and partakes more of divine love and less of human authority? But after all, the fact of division is before us and has to be dealt with. We cannot ignore it. We cannot by mere wishes expect to remove the evil; neither are we authorized inactively to wait for some great providential event which "*will restore all things.*" And yet on the other hand, by unwise handling of this present fact, we may even aggravate it; by mistaken measures to heal the wound, make it worse. What then is our duty in the premises?

In the first place, we need not be quite so much disturbed by this fact, as many seem to be. It is an evil truly to be lamented, and to be remedied also as soon as, and as far as it legitimately can be. But in the meanwhile, be it remembered for our consolation, that the fundamental and saving principles of the Gospel are found among most Christians, at least among those Orthodox Protestant denominations to whom I specially

refer, because they are specially related to us in a practical way; surrounding us on every hand, and doing, in common with us, most of the spiritual work done in this country, giving to this people their character, and to their institutions their spirit. They, as we, recognize one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. The unity of the Godhead is maintained, and in that unity the Trinity. The incarnation of the Son of God is made the initial point of historical Christianity. The death of Christ as atonement for sin, and the influences of the Spirit as the sanctifying power, are taught as God's provision for man's salvation. Faith is regarded by them as the one act in and by which man avails himself of this salvation, in recognized dependence upon the help of God's Spirit; whilst the truth and reality of that faith is said to be evinced by its fruits. As to the ethical side of Christianity, there is practically no perceptible difference amongst the different sections of the Christian Church now referred to. They are all of the same mind; they all speak the same thing.

Now, this is something; yea, a very considerable fact, to comfort us in the midst of our differences and separations. Such coincidence in doctrine and morals is, surely, no light matter, though often ignored, as though it were nothing. But this is not all. Are not the Christian churches to which I have special reference, because with them we are brought most in contact, really doing, in good degree, the work of the Gospel? What is the

design of the Gospel? Is it to organize one great association in the earth, all the parts in union with one another by subjection to one common head, monarchical or oligarchical, and to maintain this at every cost, as the life of Christianity? Is it to establish an organization through which, as by proxy, Heaven is to transact the business of individual salvation, making it the exclusive channel of divine grace, thus putting the heavenly provision into the hands of men, to dispense as by patent right; they having the power of the keys, not only to teach and rule according to the nature of divine truth, and of the human mind, but to forgive sin also? Is it the design of Christianity thus to exalt men into the place of God, and displace God from his prerogative of both direct and indirect communion and intercourse with individual souls, making the ministers of religion God's proctors, pro-actors, procurators, in the most sacred and peculiar of all his relations to his creatures? In a word, is it the purpose of Christianity to build up a great institution in the world, of imposing dimensions, which shall keep society in order by operating on the upper portion of it, through conservative appeals to selfishness and æsthetical contrivances gratifying to taste and ministering to vanity, and on the lower classes by encouraging sacerdotal notions, which bring the religionist to men rather than to God, and foster feelings of superstition rather than true spiritual religion? Oh, how far above and beyond all this the purpose for which Christ came down from Heaven! and how necessary it

is that we ever remember it and keep it close to our hearts, so that it, and not something else, shall constitute the prime and ruling aim of our ministerial life! What that purpose is the students of this institution need not to be told.

Definite organization in the church of Christ is both by necessity of nature and of divine command. But it is not *the end* of Christianity, any more than a scaffold is the end of architecture; and further still, *organization*, as a means, is one thing, and a *particular form* of organization, as a necessary means, is quite another. Civil government is one thing, and indispensable to society; but society, the very same portion of society, may exist, has existed and prospered, under different forms of government. But another consideration yet comes in here, essentially modifying our views, and carrying the idea sought to be established much farther than the argument from the analogy of society and civil government would go. Supposing God in Heaven to have reserved to himself the administration of religion, distinctively so called, in the world, through his eternal Son, and by His Spirit, and to purpose, as the very essence of that religion, that souls should come directly to Him in Christ by faith, and have fellowship with him, a fellowship in which a stranger intermeddleth not; and supposing a sense of this, a conviction of this, a feeling of this, an experience of this, to be the deepest element in true Christian character, it follows inevitably that no sacerdotal partnership *can be tolerated* of God in this

matter, inasmuch as it must inevitably tend to turn the reliance of the soul from Himself to dependence on a creature. And it also follows, that whilst instrumentalities, both personal and material, are necessary in religion, still, in order that men may bear steadily in mind that they are *only* instrumentalities, and not the spiritual agent, it is manifestly necessary, also, that they be, and be regarded effectual, not *opere operato*, but only so far as they are used in the exercise of faith; and furthermore, that it be held that the grace of the sacraments, as of the other parts of external religion, sometimes precedes, sometimes accompanies, sometimes follows the sacraments, and sometimes does neither, and that they are never to be considered necessarily synchronous. Where this view is not distinctly held by a Church, the people are in bondage to the minister, and the Spirit in bondage to its own ordinance; whereas we are told "*the wind,*" "*the Spirit,*" "*bloweth where it listeth.*" Without this the ordinances of religion, designed to bring us nearer to God, only establish a cold, formal, distant connection, and often prove a positive hindrance to near approach. In short, without this, in the course of time, the Church becomes resolved into the ministry, the ministry into the Episcopacy, the Episcopacy into Popery, and the whole into priestcraft; a mighty instrument of superstition, but a feeble instrument of true religion. It is in this way the Church of the holy, and meek and loving Jesus becomes as one of the kingdoms of this world, with its prizes of ambition,

and consequent rivalries and contentions; a sad scene of selfishness and bad passions; no longer to be likened to some calm and peaceful lake embosomed in hills which shelter it from the roughening winds, but rather to some huge caldron, boiling and bubbling with ingredients secular and sacred, acrid and sweet, all mixed up together, *scmetimes overflowing to the scalding of the nations*. Witness the whole civilized world as it is and has been for the last three years. And what is immediately before us in the future, from the same cause and after the same style of event, no mortal can predict; though, thanks to God, we know what will be the final result.

Avoiding the extravagant views of the connection of the external part of Christianity with the internal, which lead to these disastrous results, and regulating ourselves by the simple teachings of Scripture, we are prepared fairly to judge those orthodox Protestants who differ from us in matters of discipline, “naught extenuating nor setting down aught in malice.” We think them in error, and heartily wish they could see things as we see them; but when, as I have said, we listen to their preaching, perhaps as sound as our own, and observe their anxious and judicious oversight of their flocks, and mark the substantial identity of their sacraments and ours, and consider the fruits of righteousness which spring up in the sight of all men under their labors, we are constrained to believe them true servants of Jesus Christ. We cannot believe that they have, like another Prometheus, *stolen* from Heaven the holy fire by which

they are confessedly actuated. They do not wear the air of robbers of sacred things, or receivers of things stolen. They do not live the life or die the death of men whose purpose or character is sacrilegious. Their spirit is rather that of those who truly love our Lord, and their work is a manifest casting out of devils in His name. Such being the case, what shall we do? Shall we forbid them? *We forbid them not.* We rather bless God on their behalf. We cannot suppose so much “*virtue*” as we see in them has come forth from the Master to them by some oversight on His part, or by some accident otherwise. We do not believe that in the dispensations of the Spirit such mistakes are made. The success of their labors, done as they are in His name, regulated by His Word, sanctified by prayer, honoring His religion, and causing multitudes to live soberly, righteously and godly who would otherwise be the servants of sin; all this, we hold, is a seal of Divine approbation, genuine, not counterfeit, to be honored, not despised.

And yet we think we can show them a more excellent way. In general conformity to the principles and practices of the New Testament, and to the dictates of sound reason and common sense, we believe we have vastly the advantage. So strong is my own conviction on the subject, that I am thoroughly persuaded if we were everywhere true to our system, and presented it to the world for its acceptance, with our peculiarities of the Prayer-Book, Episcopacy, and Confirmation, unaccompa-

nied with clogs and hindrances foreign to its spirit as the spirit of the Gospel and the Reformation, we should find it appreciated, approved, and adopted by increasing numbers yearly, who now see no special excellence in it. Yes, it would gather to itself accessions from all directions, as naturally as the magnet attracts the iron filings. I would not cherish in myself or others denominational vanity and self-conceit; *that* is a plant that needs no watering; stick it where you will, in the most dry and barren soil, and it will flourish. A church sunk to the lowest point of spirituality, poor and miserable, and blind and naked, may, we know from Scripture, think itself rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing. No, it is not with a view to quicken a languid self-esteem that I speak thus of our superior excellences as a church organization, but only to make two final suggestions in regard to the manner of our advocacy of them. In commending our peculiarities to others, we should give good heed to *our logic* and to *our spirit*: deficient in either, our labor will be in vain.

As to the first, we should be sure of the *premises* from which we start; not some traditional notion which we have inherited and held without investigation; not some proof-text applicable only in sound; not some uninspired author or number of authors, of whatever period, in forgetfulness of the truth that the word of man is not the word of God. We should be equally self-observant in the *process* of our reasoning, not sliding into the delusive notion that inferences, however regular in form, can be

drawn as safely in theology as in mathematics, or that all the mere inferences in the world can put palpable facts out of countenance. And in regard to the *position* we would make good, in doing so we should take heed and not separate ourselves from the base-line of vital, practical Christianity and common sense; for to advance too far, *i. e.*, to try to establish too much, is often worse than to establish too little: we *may* proffer help to the Lord as the God of truth, which in his eyes is worse than a vain oblation, a weariness and abomination.

As to *the spirit* in which we should advocate our peculiarities: ah! it is almost everything. In science it may not be important, but here it is essential. God's work must be done in God's way. God is the God of love, and He tells us, as we are not called to judge men, whilst He is judge of quick and dead, of men and angels, that for *us* the greatest of all gifts is love. Whatever, therefore, we do, even in the advocacy of truth, if we would please him, must be done in this spirit; otherwise, which is a further consideration, it will only frustrate its own object. That eminently sensible and saintly man, Bishop Griswold, has beautifully said, that "*truth ought always to appear in the garments of charity.*" So appearing, it is irresistible; for it is found in combination with the mightiest principle in the moral universe. Though the good bishop spoke of "*garments*" of charity, he did not mean the outside appearance. *Manner* is important, indeed, to avoid doing mischief; but to do much positive good by our advocacy, there must be the *soul* of love in.

it. It is indispensable to good everywhere. Love, love! Angelic tongue cannot adequately utter its praises, every way divine as it is. Its fountain is the bosom of God: nay, in a high and transcendent sense, God *is* love. By it He was moved to create, and by it He hates nothing that He has made. As to love in angels and redeemed saints, it is enough to say, it is the very atmosphere they breathe; it constitutes the sweetness of their character and the joy of their existence. In man, here upon the earth, it is his chief excellence, his power, and his happiness. It is the bond which binds him to the universe: *love to God*, in complacency towards His infinite perfections, and in gratitude for His mercy; *love to Christ*, both complacent, and grateful, and tender, because of His perfect Godhead and perfect manhood, marvellously combined for our redemption, and by which He is made sympathetic with us, and approachable by us, as our elder brother; *love to man* as man, *philanthropy* in its highest aspects; love to man as of the same kind, of the same race, living in the same world, in the same moral condition, under the same redemptive dispensation, on probation alike under the grace of Christ, and traveling together onward to the same eternal world. Love like this, rising so high, stooping so low, so all-embracing, what a trait of mind, what a feature of character! Well might Edwards maintain, in his deep metaphysics and high spirituality, that "*it is the essence of all virtue.*" Lovely and large in itself, it enlarges and makes lovable the soul it actuates. By it the man is delivered from all

narrowness and littleness. It will not let him look at his own things only, but rather at the things of others. It draws him out of himself, and makes him self-denying for others' good. It finds its happiness in making others happy. Love has no enemies: it counts all its friends.

I have said we should give heed, as theologians, and especially as advocates of our denominational peculiarities, to our *logic* and our *love*, distinguishing between them. Though distinguishable, they are intimately connected: they act and react on one another. Love observes proportion. It is not a blind and doting fondness, which cannot distinguish between the essential and the less important. Its powers, as finite, it is not disposed to waste. In its benevolence and beneficence it distinguishes necessarily between the soul and body of man, and between the vital and secondary interests of both. It emphasizes what is emphatic, and slurs what should be passed over lightly. Thus instinctively acting in the *moral* sphere, it fosters in the mind a habit, in a strictly *logical* way, favorable to a due regard to the proportions of truth. It acts the man, and therefore puts away childish things, so far, at least, that they shall be kept in their place, and not usurp a regard which is due only to things manly. But it is in another way, chiefly, that love helps logic. What are the causes of error among individual men? Are they not *ignorance* and *prejudice*, especially the latter? But what is the chief source of prejudice? As manifestly, *selfishness*. Yea, is not even *self-love* a fruitful *occasion* of this evil?

The mere fact that anything is, or is not, *of us*, has a tendency to create a bias, often very strong, and quite aside from the merits of the subject, for or against anything which is offered for our acceptance, or which we are offering to others. Cicero tells us that "*hostis*" originally meant the same as "*peregrinus*." How happened it that a word which first stood for *foreigner* came to signify enemy, but because of that egoism of human nature which can bear with nothing which is not of its own part? Do we not see the same thing in the disciples of our Lord? "*We forbid them,*" said they, with marvellous naivetè, "*because they followed not with us.*" It was nothing that these persons were casting out devils, and so doing a good work; nor casting out devils in Christ's name, so putting honor on him, whether professing to do so or not: it was all of no account with the disciples, simply because these persons followed not with them; although, as we know, and as they then must have known, though dimly perhaps, that the mission of Christ to our world was "*to destroy the works of the devil.*" Here, then, was prejudice sadly blinding the eyes to "the true, the beautiful, and the good," and perverting the logical judgment, so that it could not look beyond local connections and outward relations, to *truth*, which is ubiquitous, and not local; nor to *holiness*, which may exist anywhere under the truth, through the power of that Spirit who uses truth as His instrument, and who claims to be everywhere "free." And this evil influence of selfishness on logic is often increased tenfold by special causes, by heredi-

tary bad training, by pernicious accidental associations, by a perverse temper, and by ambitious competitions. But in whatever way the evil works, it is plain that the best remedy is the divine gift of charity. This will kill those unreasoning antipathies out of which prejudice grows; will make us recognize Christ's image everywhere; make us say heartily, "*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*"; will rejoice that Christ is preached by any; and will make Christ himself "*the way, the truth, and the life*," and the love of Him the sum of actual human salvation here and hereafter.

Thus are Christian love and sound logic mutually related (for as love helps logic, so does true logic help love), and it is only by the proper combination of the two that we can become effectual and profitable advocates of our Protestant, our Episcopal, and our Liturgic Church. A blundering advocate hinders more than he helps, and a blunderer he is sure to be who lacks in either of the two qualities named. Let it not be supposed, however, for a moment, that it is thought young men should be trained and sent forth with the idea reigning in their heads and hearts that their mission is to proselyte. Far from us be such a sentiment: it is not to proselyte but to preach the Gospel, to testify repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, to bring men (wherever else they may be brought) first and directly to Christ, that a vital union may be formed with Him personally, so that they shall

be in Christ henceforth, as their righteousness and sanctification, and Christ in them, the exclusive hope of glory. What I mean then is, that to go forth and forward in this enlarged spirit, with these high aims giving complexion to our work, this is the very best way of advocating our peculiarities; for it will best secure for them an impartial consideration, *which is all that is needed*. And when it becomes necessary to go beyond this silent and indirect, but most potent way of recommending our system to our fellow-men or fellow-Christians, and to advocate it by word and argument; the method recommended will save us from that headlong logic, and that narrow and excommunicating temper, and tone and conduct, which produce recoil rather than conviction; so retarding the progress of a cause dear to us all for various reasons, variously combined; to some from immemorial inheritance; to others through long use; to others by rational conviction; to others by sweet experiences; to all, let us hope, under the prevailing influence of the Spirit of truth and holiness.

I have done. I have said what I have said, first, of course, because I believe it *true*; secondly, because, as I think, it is *not untimely* on an occasion like this; thirdly, because, if true it is *important* truth; and lastly, because it is not proclaimed by those who hold it *as often as it should be*. If I am not mistaken on these points, then I would humbly ask God to add His blessing to what has been said, for Christ's sake. AMEN.